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Strength and Vitality of the Collective Farm

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THE STRENGTH AND VITALITY OF THE
KOLKHOZ SYSTEM

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Despite tremendous difficulties created by the war, the agriculture of the Soviet Union has successfully coped with the tasks which the government has placed before it. Without any major stoppages agriculture has successfully supplied the Red Army and the civilian population with food stuffs, and industry with raw agricultural products.

The Soviet peasantry has revealed a high consciousness of social interests which was unheard of in the history of rural districts; it has shown by its selfless labor that it considers the war against the German usurpers to be its vital cause, a war for its life and freedom.

During World War I, the backwardness and disintegration of agriculture in tsarist Russia was one of the causes of military failures.

The kolkhoz system proved to be capable of meeting the needs of the front and the civilian population during the days of the Great Fatherland War. Kolkhoz peasantry can be proud of its contribution to the cause of victory.

A tremendous role in the successes of the kolkhoz system during the war was played by the advantages of socialist organization of agriculture, and the equipping of agriculture with high-

grade technology. As early as 1940, MTS tractors were carrying out 75 percent of all operations during the spring plowing of kolkhoz fields, 80 percent in raising fallow earth, and 72 percent of the operations in deep plowing.

During the years of the Stalin Five-Year plans in our country, a vast agricultural base was created in the East. In the Urals, in Siberia, in the Far East, and in the rayons of Kazakhstan total acreage under cultivation was expanded considerably. In rayons where irrigation was practiced, acreage irrigated increased from 4 million hectares in 1913 to 7 million hectares in 1940. Around industrial centers and large cities a base was created for production of vegetables, potatoes, and livestock products.

All of this tremendous creative work, carried on under the guidance of Comrade Stalin, had a positive effect during the years of the Fatherland War of the Soviet people against the German imperialists.

At the beginning of the war the enemy succeeded for a while in occupying a number of very important agricultural rayons. The relative participation of acreages under cultivation in kolkhozes, which by autumn of 1942 had become territory temporarily seized by the enemy, comprised 41 percent in relation to the total volume of kolkhoz crops. In this territory was located 37 percent of the total acreage under grain crops, 49 percent of industrial crops, 50 percent of crops of flax-fiber, 50 percent of sunflower, 87 percent of sugar beet, 54 percent of potatoes, 56 percent of vegetables. By the end of 1940, kolkhozes in this territory had 44

percent of horses, 38 percent of large-horned cattle, 28 percent of sheep and goats, and 59 percent of pigs. As many as 107,000 kolkhozes (45.7 percent of the total number) and 3,000 machine tractor stations (48 percent) were located in the territory seized by the enemy.

These facts attest to the colossal damage which our agriculture suffered as a result of attack by the enemy. Very important agricultural rayons -- the Ukraine and Crimea, Don and Kuban', Belorussia and the Baltic area, and certain others -- were temporarily stricken from our balance sheet.

The German Fascists, carrying out the instructions of the criminal Hitler government, inflicted tremendous damage upon these most important agricultural rayons. The Germans destroyed 98,000 kolkhozes, 2,890 machine tractor stations, selected destroyed, or stole 7 million horses, 17,000 head of large-horned cattle, 20 million pigs, and 27 million sheep and goats. They seized, destroyed, or sent to Germany 137,000 tractors, 49,000 combines, and a tremendous number of other agricultural machines. Damages inflicted by the German Fascists upon kolkhozes alone comprises the gigantic total of 181 billion rubles, at 1941 price levels.

The war also had a telling effect upon the condition of agriculture in the rear area rayons. The Red Army and industry absorbed a considerable part of the working force, and primarily the most highly-skilled male population. At the same time, resources of mechanical and draft animal traction were restricted, the production of tractors, agricultural machines, and spare parts for them was curtailed, and the supplying of agriculture with ma-

terials of industrial production was curtailed.

Providing our country and the army with food supplies during the war was done, even during the period most difficult for us, by drawing chiefly upon domestic resources. The task was resolved under conditions of sharp curtailment of supplying agriculture with labor resources, traction force, and other means of production.

On fixed territory of the Soviet Union (excluding occupied rayons), traction resources were cut 32 percent in kolkhozes and machine tractor stations, the number of trucks decreased 89 percent, and manpower in kolkhozes was cut considerably.

Together with this quantitative decrease in labor and power resources during the war years, qualitative changes also took place. For example, the relative participation of women in the makeup of able-bodied population of kolkhozes was 56 percent in 1940, and rose to 73 percent to 1943; the proportion of adolescents to adults of the able-bodied population was 12 percent in 1940, and rose to 22 percent in 1943. During the war years, the part of the kolkhoze population most capable of working and most highly skilled went into the army or industry.

More than 2 million persons, including about 1.5 million women, were trained in agriculture during the Fatherland War as machine tractor ~~personnel to replace~~ the departed skilled personnel. The relative participation of women among working tractor and combine operators rose from 9 percent in 1940 to 55 percent in 1944.

Mechanical supplies for agriculture, chiefly in the area of spare tractor parts, was cut sharply. The production of spare parts for tractors was five times lower, and for many basic parts was more than 10 and 20 times lower. For one tractor, an average value of 594 rubles of mechanical parts were produced in 1940, 357 rubles in 1941, 142 rubles in 1942, and 239 rubles in 1943.

Shipment of fuel, which in 1940 comprised 8.1 tons for one tractor, was cut to 4.7 tons in 1942 and to 4.2 tons in 1943; that is, shipment of fuel was cut 48 percent compared with 1940.

Because of this, for 48 rear-area republics, oblasts, and krays, the volume of tractor pool operations converted to plowing was cut more than twice in 1943. The tractor pool of machine tractor stations worked a total of only 50.3 million hectares in 1943. For each 15 horsepower tractor, the output fell from 311 hectares in 1940 to 182 hectares in 1943. The degree of mechanization of basic field operations fell: for spring plowing, from 82 percent in 1940 to 52 percent in 1943; for sowing spring grains, from 52 percent to 27 percent; for plowing fallow land, from 77 percent to 45 percent; for harvesting grains, from 51 percent to 20 percent; for turning plow land, from 73 percent to 16 percent.

The degree of mechanization of field operation was most sharply reduced in rayons where prior to the war it had been most high-- in the Volga area, Siberia, in the southern Urals.

Socialist agriculture was confronted with new, grave difficulties which have complicated the solution of the task for expanding agricultural production.

The situation which developed during the war demanded that our machine tractor stations, sovkhozes, and kolkhozes, and agricultural workers not wait to receive everything in finished form, but that they seek maximum opportunities on the spot, energetically mobilizing all reserves and using them most rationally. It was necessary, if only partially, to compensate the temporarily lost territory for acreages of a number of agricultural crops. It was necessary to increase production of potatoes and vegetables to a substantial degree.

The Great Fatherland War was a severe test of the strength of the kolkhoz system and the vitality of socialist agriculture. Our kolkhozes, sovkhozes, and machine tractor stations passed this test with distinction.

It is difficult to imagine what would have happened to our Motherland if we had not had a kolkhoz system but had had a small-scale, individual, peasant economy. The strength of the kolkhoz system is shown particularly brilliantly by comparing data on the agricultural situation in our country in 1916 -- the third year of World War I -- with data on its condition in the same territory in 1943 -- the third year of the Great Fatherland War. However, we must remember that the scale of the recent war -- with regard to territory encompassed by military operations, with regard to the amount of population drawn into the war, and with regard to the amount of material assets expended -- was immeasurably larger than in the war of 1914 - 1918.

The volume of agricultural production in 1943 on an area basis significantly surpassed not only the volume of production

in 1916 but also the production of prewar 1913, the most fruitful year. The total acreage under cultivation in the fixed territory was more than 26 percent above that of 1913 and 39 percent more than 1916. Acreage under grain crops in 1943 was 10 percent more than 1913 and 19 percent more than 1916.

In particular, sowing of industrial crops, potatoes, and vegetables increased intensively. Acreage under industrial crops comprises the following as compared with 1916: cotton, 170 percent; flax fiber, 131 percent; sunflower, 239 percent. Acreage under sugar beet surpassed 19 times the acreage under crop in 1916. More than 4.1 times more potatoes were planted, and 4.7 times more vegetables were sown as compared with 1916.

It is characteristic that for all agricultural crops, acreages under cultivation and yields were considerably higher in 1943 than in 1916, even though there were less traction resources and fewer able-bodied population on kolkhozes than the individual farms had in 1916.

Traction force was utilized considerably more productively in kolkhoz farms. An average of 7.7 hectares of sowing fell to one live or mechanical horsepower in 1943, while in 1913 it was just 3.4 hectares. At the same time we must note that the relative participation of industrial crops, potatoes, and vegetables in total acreage under cultivation rose from 8 percent in 1913 to 14 percent in 1943.

This became possible thanks to the advantages which were made the basis of socialist organization of kolkhoz production, thanks to the technological rearmament of agriculture provided for

on the basis of creating a mighty socialist industry.

Only large-scale socialist kolkhoz production, with considerably less traction resources than in 1916, could in 1943 provide for a volume of cultivated acreage which totalled 139 percent over 1916.

Labor productivity under conditions of large-scale socialist agriculture proved to be considerably higher than on an individual farm. It is sufficient to state that in 1943, one able-bodied man in the kolkhoz cultivated twice as much crop area as a peasant did on an individual farm in 1913. In 1943 an average able-bodied kolkhoz worker provided for cultivating and harvesting 4.1 hectares, while in 1913 one able-bodied individual could provide for cultivating only 2.2 hectares. The labor activity of kolkhoz workers, and primarily women kolkhoz workers, rose sharply during the war. Evidence of this is the increase in average output per working day in the social economy of kolkhozes: 26 percent increase from 1940 through 1944.

Thus, thanks to the advantage of the kolkhoz system, there has been a sharp increase in labor productivity of peasants, who have more fully utilized agricultural reserves; this, in the final analysis, has made it possible to overcome with distinction the incredible difficulties which confronted kolkhozes and machine tractor stations during the war.

We must recognize 1942 and the ~~first half of 1943~~ as years which were the most arduous and difficult for our agriculture. Significant successes marked 1944 in all sectors of the agricultural

front. 1945 became the year for beginning the reestablishment of agriculture. In that year, harvest acreage in kolkhozes increased by 1,620,000 hectares, acreage of cotton plants increased by 52,000 hectares, sugar beet by 119,000 hectares, and vegetables and potatoes by 188,000 hectares as compared with 1944.

The extent of mechanization of agriculture was raised considerably. By 1 November 1945, MTS tractors had produced for kolkhozes 20.9 million hectares more plowing than in 1944, and combines had harvested 3,711,000 more hectares of grain crops than in 1944.

Liberated rayons took a great step forward in reestablishing agriculture. Now the total acreage under cultivation in liberated rayons, for kolkhozes and individual farms, has reached 69 percent as compared with the prewar total, and 75 percent of the cultivated acreage is in grain crops.

Last year, kolkhozes of liberated rayons increased the number of livestock: horses, increase of 51 percent; large-horned cattle, 88 percent; sheep and goats, 37 percent; pigs, 113 percent. Oblasts such as the Moscow and Kalinin oblasts have not only completely reestablished the prewar level of the number of productive livestock in kolkhozes, but also have significantly surpassed the number of livestock on hand prior to the war.

In 1945 (for 7 months) liberated rayons also had an increase in number of livestock: large-horned cattle, increase of 6 percent; sheep, 41 percent; and pigs, 44 percent.

Liberated rayons have rendered a great deal of aid to the government, and also to kolkhozes of rear area oblasts, by shipping

tractors, agricultural machines, work and breed livestock, and by sending agricultural specialists. The state has significantly aided kolkhozes and peasant farms of liberated rayons with loans of seed and with state credits. To liberated rayons have been directed more than 25,000 tractors, more than 112,000 agricultural machines and implements, and more than 3 million head of livestock of all types, including 1.2 million head of large-horned cattle, 1.4 million sheep, and about 300,000 horses. To liberated rayons have been assigned 6,000 agronomists, zootechnicians, mechanics, engineers, and other agricultural specialists.

More than 3,000 machine tractor stations, which have rendered an exceptionally great amount of aid in carrying out agricultural operations, were established or newly organized to render aid to kolkhozes and peasant farms of liberated rayons.

Thanks to state aid by credit and thanks to free release of lumber, about one million homes have already been built by kolkhoz workers in liberated rayons.

In their experience, peasants of liberated rayons are again convinced that only a kolkhoz economy can rescue the peasants from their want, can provide for rapid reestablishment of the economy, and create conditions for a cultural, prosperous life. If there were no kolkhoz system, agriculture in occupied rayons could not have reestablished its crushed productive forces as rapidly as it has. ~~An individual peasant farm would have needed long years to~~ heal the wounds inflicted by the occupying forces, and to rise from poverty. The rapid reestablishment of agriculture in liberated rayons again shows the indestructible might of the kolkhoz system

and the inexhaustible possibilities that the collective form of economy offers.

Now all the prerequisites are being created for the mighty and flourishing growth of agriculture. A broad Five-Year plan (1946 - 1950) for developing the entire national economy, including agriculture, is being drawn up in accordance with the decision of the party and the government. The task being posed is, in 5 years, not only to reestablish the economy in liberated rayons and to heal the wounds inflicted by the war, but also to surpass considerably the prewar development level of the national economy of the Soviet Union.

The basic task of the Five-Year Plan for reestablishing agriculture is the decisive increase of production of crop and animal husbandry products. In this Five-Year Plan, agriculture must surpass the prewar level, significantly increase its supply to the country of food products and industrial raw material, and provide for significant raising of the welfare of the workers; it must create an abundance of products.

In this Five-Year Plan, improved, and also new, perfected tractors and agricultural machines will be widely used, and will provide for mechanization of labor-consuming operations in all branches of agriculture.

It is planned to develop agricultural electrification on a wide scale. Universal and widespread usage of electric power in agricultural production and in the everyday life of kolkhoz workers will raise the power rearmament and productivity of agri-

cultural labor, and will raise the profitability of kolkhozes. Tens of thousands of kolkhozes must be newly electrified during this Five-Year Plan.

Exceptional attention must be paid to developing the sowing of perennial grasses. The new Five-Year Plan must be a Five-Year Plan for widespread usage of complete mechanization and widespread application of grass sowing. The planned threefold increase in sowing of perennial grasses will create the conditions under which kolkhozes will introduce, and to a considerable degree master, the correct grassland crop rotations, and thus will provide for a rise in the improvement of cultivation, a considerable increase in harvest, and an increase of fodder reserves for a rapid development of animal husbandry.

A considerable overall rise in the improvement of cultivation and animal husbandry will be ensured by this Five-Year Plan on the basis of the widespread development of mechanization and electrification of agriculture, and on the basis of substantial expansion of grass sowing.

A considerable surpassing of the prewar number of all types of livestock and a considerable increase in the productivity of animal husbandry are important tasks of the Fourth Five-Year Plan.

Widespread electrification in agriculture and in the everyday life of kolkhoz workers will improve production conditions and will lighten the labor of kolkhoz workers. Conditions will be created for more productive labor in all branches of agriculture. On the basis of raising labor productivity, the welfare of kolkhozes

improved significantly, and the income which kolkhoz workers receive per working day will increase. All this will provide for further growth of the cultural and prosperous life in the kolkhoz rural districts.

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